

▶ **OTHER FREE FEATURES**

Tribune's Breaking Story
Shareholder activism and a \$2 billion stock-buyback plan have breathed life into Tribune Co.'s shares recently. But some analysts say it won't be enough, and a breakup of the media giant may be in the cards after its value has fallen in the past two years despite efforts by management to rein in costs.

Power Shift Looms for Statehouses

With several statehouses controlled by razor-thin edges, the potential for swings in power may be greater at the state level than in Congress.

▶ **See More Free Features**

▶ **Go to WSJ.com's Home Page**

▶ **BROWSE WSJ.com**



- [News](#)
- [Technology](#)
- [Markets](#)
- [Personal Journal](#)
- [Opinion](#)
- [Weekend & Leisure](#)
- [Health](#)
- [Media & Marketing](#)
- [Asia](#)
- [Europe](#)
- [Americas](#)

- Free Dow Jones Sites
- [MarketWatch](#)
 - [CareerJournal](#)
 - [OpinionJournal](#)
 - [StartupJournal](#)
 - [RealEstateJournal](#)

Free, Legal and Ignored

Colleges Offer Music Downloads, But Their Students Just Say No; Too Many Strings Attached

By **NICK TIMIRAOS**
July 6, 2006; Page B1

As a student at Cornell University, Angelo Petrigh had access to free online music via a legal music-downloading service his school provided. Yet the 21-year-old still turned to illegal file-sharing programs.

The reason: While Cornell's online music program, through Napster, gave him and other students free, legal downloads, the email introducing the service explained that students could keep their songs only until they graduated. "After I read that, I decided I didn't want to even try it," says Mr. Petrigh, who will be a senior in the fall at the Ithaca, N.Y., school.

College students don't turn down much that's free. But when it comes to online music, even free hasn't been enough to persuade many students to use such digital download services as Napster, Rhapsody, Ruckus and Cdigix. As a result, some schools have dropped their services, and others are considering doing so or have switched to other providers.

To stop students from pirating music, more than 120 colleges and universities have tried providing free or subsidized access to the legal subscription services over campus networks in the past few years. About 7% of all four-year schools and 31% of private research universities provided one of the legal downloading services, according to a 2005 survey of 500 schools by the Campus Computing Project, a nonprofit that studies how colleges use information technology. Universities typically pay for the services, some with private grants and others through student fees. While a typical monthly subscription to Napster is \$9.95, the schools have been able to cut special deals, funded in part by record companies.

Purdue University officials say that lower-than-expected demand among its students stems in part from all the frustrating restrictions that accompany legal downloading.

SUBSCRIBE NOW



Subscribe Now to The Online Journal and benefit from many exclusive online features, including access to Journal archives and personalized news tracking.

Subscribe Now ▶

advertisement

May 26, 2006
The Dow® celebrates 110 years as the world's most quoted market indicator



TODAY'S MOST POPULAR

Students at the West Lafayette, Ind., school can play songs free on their laptops but have to pay to burn songs onto CDs or load them onto a digital music device.

There's also the problem of compatibility: The services won't run on [Apple Computer](#) Inc. computers, which are owned by 19% of college students, according to a 2006 survey of 1,200 students by the research group Student Monitor. In addition, the files won't play on Apple iPods, which are owned by 42% of college students, according to the survey.

- [Enron's Kenneth Lay Is Dead at 64](#)
- [Surviving a Real-Estate Slowdown](#)
- [World Cup Fans Card ESPN](#)
- [Digital Music: A Primer](#)
- [North Korea Rebuked for Missile Tests](#)

"People still want to have a music collection. Music listeners like owning their music, not renting," says Bill Goodwin, 21, who graduated in May from the University of Southern California in Los Angeles. USC decided last year that it was finished with Napster after fewer than 500 students signed up, and it moved to Ruckus, hoping students would find that service more appealing.

Meanwhile, both Cornell and Purdue will no longer offer their students free music next year. An anonymous donor had paid for Cornell to offer Napster for two years, but the student government passed on a chance to keep the service by charging students a fee. "There hasn't been an overwhelming response to keep it," says Kwame Thomison, Cornell's student assembly president. "Students that enjoyed the service enough can pay for it themselves."

The number of students using Napster at George Washington University dropped by more than half between the first and second year, from one-third to one-seventh of eligible users. Alexa Kim, who oversees the Washington school's program, attributes the higher use at the start to the service's novelty and to press attention during the inaugural year. She adds that the university hasn't decided if it will renew its contract.

Colleges started offering the services in part because they were concerned that the recording industry might try to hold them liable for their students' copyright violations. So far no schools have been sued by the recording industry.

Universities also have another reason for reducing illegal downloading: The large amount of bandwidth used by movie and music downloads chokes universities' computer networks. The subscription services complement university filtering programs that can identify users who are misusing school networks. "The bandwidth that I recovered saved us \$75,000 a year in network costs," says Matthew Jett Hall, assistant vice chancellor at Vanderbilt University in Nashville, Tenn. The university's Napster program requires users to pay \$2 a month for unlimited downloads.

The Recording Industry Association of America says it has been happy with the progress the program has made so far. "Universities tend to move not all that quick to do things like this, so it's really quite an achievement," says RIAA President Cary Sherman.

Some schools that don't offer free downloads dismiss the subscription services as too costly for the results they achieve, especially because so many students now buy music from Apple's iTunes Music Store. "We were not in a position to offer an alternative to iTunes," says Lev Gonick, the chief information officer at Case Western Reserve University in Cleveland. "The alternatives looked like they had more sizzle than steak."

There is also little consensus among administrators about how successful the services have been in eliminating piracy. Although some say complaints from the recording industry have dropped sharply, no one can tell if that's because fewer students are engaging in illegal file-sharing or if the industry simply doesn't want to go after schools that are spending money to combat the problem. "The RIAA's push to buy into these services strikes me as protection money. Buy in and we'll protect you from our lawsuits," says Kenneth C. Green, the Campus Computing Project's director.

The RIAA denies the charge. "We do sue students and send takedown notices to universities that have legal services all the time," says Mr. Sherman. Universities have a particular responsibility to teach students the value of intellectual property, he adds, because they are "probably the No. 1 creator of intellectual property." And he disputes the idea that the subscription services have fallen out of favor. The number of campuses that subscribe will increase "pretty significantly" in the fall, he says.

Even at schools where more than half of the students use the services, few choose to buy songs. Only 2% of students at the University of Rochester in New York reported buying a song that they had downloaded from Napster in a fall 2005 survey of about 700 students. In the same survey, 10% said they downloaded songs from other services -- not necessarily legally -- after finding one they liked on Napster.

"There isn't that much we can do," acknowledges Aileen Atkins, Napster's senior vice president for business affairs and general counsel. "If they have an iPod, they're going to buy it on iTunes. It's a fact of life."

Write to Nick Timiraos at nick.timiraos@wsj.com



Sponsored by

TOSHIBA
COPY • FAX • PRINT

[Return To Top](#)

[Subscribe](#) [Log In](#) [Take a Tour](#) [Contact Us](#) [Help](#) [Email Setup](#) [Customer Service: Online](#) | [Print](#)

[Privacy Policy](#) [Subscriber Agreement & Terms of Use](#) [Mobile Devices](#) [RSS Feeds](#)

[News Licensing](#) [Advertising](#) [About Dow Jones](#)

Copyright © 2006 Dow Jones & Company, Inc. All Rights Reserved

DOWJONES